School Counselors' Partnerships With Linguistically Diverse Families: An Exploratory Study

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Abstract

Little research to date has investigated the involvement of school counselors in partnerships with linguistically diverse families. This article reviews the results of a study with school counselors ($N = 95$) in a Midwestern state on their involvement in school, family, and community partnerships with linguistically diverse families. The results indicated that school principal expectations, school counselor role perceptions about partnerships, time constraints, and training in partnership implementation were positively related to school counselor involvement in SFC partnerships with linguistically diverse families.

Key Words: School Counselor Involvement in Partnerships Survey, linguistically diverse families, students, English language learners, ELLs, parent involvement, school–family–community collaboration, counselors, diversity

Introduction

The number of linguistically diverse students in the U.S. public school system has increased significantly in recent years (Araujo, 2009). In 2018, primary and secondary public school enrollment is projected to grow to 54 million (Planty et al., 2009). In the 2004–2005 school year, 10.5% of students (5.1 million) were linguistically diverse (Payan & Nettles, 2008). In 2007, 20% of children ages 5–17 (10.8 million) spoke a language at home other than

English, and 5% (2.7 million) spoke English with difficulty; 75% of those who had difficulty in speaking English spoke Spanish (Planty et al., 2009). By the year 2026 the number of linguistically diverse students in American schools will rise to 25% (Garcia, 2002).

As a result of increasing numbers of linguistically diverse students, many schools face the challenge of building partnerships with linguistically diverse families. Studies have documented that students from diverse cultural backgrounds score lower on achievement tests than their White peers (Bali & Alvarez, 2004); such academic issues may be due to language difficulties (Schwallie-Giddis, Anstrom, Sánchez, Sardi, & Granato, 2004). Linguistically diverse students are at risk academically (Park-Taylor, Walsh, & Ventura, 2007), and learning a new language can also create anxiety and social isolation (Spomer & Cowen, 2001). In addition, these students may experience posttraumatic stress disorder, racial labeling, different learning styles, inadequate social support networks, and lack of social acceptance (Williams & Butler, 2003).

Due to the multifaceted issues linguistically diverse students experience, they need an advocate within the school to help them negotiate the system and to engage their families. School professionals are in a position to strengthen rapport with linguistically diverse families to promote school, family, and community partnerships for the social, emotional, and academic welfare of every student (Bryan, 2005; Epstein, 1995; Henderson & Mapp, 2002). School counselors are in the best position to promote partnerships with families due to their expertise in human development, collaboration, and systems change (Davis & Lambie, 2005). School counselors have the skills required to partner with students, school staff, and families to identify perceptions, procedures, and policies that obstruct the academic experiences of culturally diverse students (ASCA, 2004). The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model (2005) supports school counselors as leaders, advocates, collaborative team members, and agents of systemic change. As the number of linguistically diverse students and family members increases, so does school counselors' challenge to meet the personal, social, and academic needs of linguistically diverse students and to provide services that utilize effective communication between schools and families (Davis & Lambie, 2005). Therefore, school counselors cannot meet the needs of students and families alone (Bryan & Henry, 2008). To help school children develop and learn optimally, school counselors must be prepared to partner with families and community members to meet children's developmental, cultural, linguistic, and educational needs. However, existing literature on the role of school counselors' work with linguistically diverse families is limited. Few studies have examined school counselors' beliefs and

perceptions of school–family–community partnership roles and whether or not their training prepares them for such partnerships (Bryan & Holcomb-McCoy, 2004, 2007; Bryan & Griffin, 2010). School counselors' beliefs, knowledge, and skill competencies for working with linguistically diverse families should be examined to ensure all students' needs are met. It is crucial that schools and families work together for students to reach educational success.

In this article, the term *linguistically diverse* refers to those students and families who speak languages other than English. Linguistically diverse students are also classified as English Language Learners (ELL). For the purpose of this article, the following definition will be used to identify a linguistically diverse student: According to the U.S. Department of Education (2007), *linguistically diverse* refers to school children who are either non-English proficient or limited English proficient; a *linguistically diverse* student is

> (a) 3 to 21 years of age, (b) enrolled or preparing to enroll in elementary or secondary school, (c) either not born in the United States or have a native language other than English, and (d) owing to difficulty in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding English, not able to meet the State's proficient level of achievement to successfully achieve in English-only classrooms or not able to participate fully in society. (p. 2)

School, Family, and Community Partnerships With Linguistically Diverse Families

School–family–community partnerships are "collaborative relationships and initiatives in which school counselors, school personnel, students, families, community members, and other stakeholders work jointly and mutually to develop and implement school and community-based prevention and intervention programs and activities to improve children's chances of academic, personal/social, career, and college success" (Bryan & Holcomb-McCoy, 2010, p. ii). Collaborative partnerships with community agencies when planning prevention and intervention programs are fundamental to assisting students and families (Keys & Lockhart, 1999). It is important to identify and make use of the resources which exist in the community (e.g., health, social services, substance abuse services, juvenile justice, recreation, service clubs, and other organizations) to strengthen school counseling programs (Thompson, 2002). School counselors serve as liaisons between the school and the community; thus, partnership practices are fundamental functions of school counseling programs (Davis, 2005). Bemak (2000) advised three ways to work with community organizations: (a) connecting students and their families to the community resources to meet their unique needs (i.e., summer and/

or enrichment programs, alternative education, employment, mental health, health care); (b) making collaborative arrangements with the community to bring in services (e.g., substance abuse counselors working with students in the school); and (c) partnering to develop and implement prevention and intervention services to be offered in or outside of the school. Such collaborations are vital to promote good public relations and support for school projects and activities that demand community participation. After reviewing 51 studies with sound methodological standards, Henderson and Mapp (2002) outlined nine recommendations on how to turn these research findings related to school–family–community partnerships into action, some of which included: (a) increasing the competence of school staff as they work with families and community members; (b) enhancing a philosophy of partnership which underlines sharing power; (c) connecting family and community partnerships to student learning; (d) working with families to build social and political relationships; and (e) building strong connections between schools and community associations. Partnerships among school stakeholders are especially relevant for school counselors who find themselves in the position to implement wide-ranging solutions to various issues (e.g., homelessness, poverty, academic failure, school alienation) that many students encounter (Bryan, 2005). School counselors reported that partnerships with multiple stakeholders often result in innovative solutions to complex student problems (Bryan & Henry, 2008).

There are concerns about whether or not school counselor training prepares school counselors for school–family–community partnerships (Bryan & Holcomb-McCoy, 2004, 2007), especially with linguistically diverse families. School counselors revealed feeling more uncomfortable working with these families than with linguistically diverse students, since they believe working with linguistically diverse families requires cross-cultural understanding of family dynamics (Schwallie-Giddis et al., 2004). Schools with high percentages of racially and ethnically diverse students and with students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds had a smaller number of school counselors and had higher student-to-counselor ratios in comparison to schools with lower percentages of students of color and students experiencing economic disadvantages (Lapan, Gysbers, Cook, Bragg, & Robbins, 2006). Translators are often not available to help, which intensifies school counselors' frustrations in communication when working with these students and families (Schwallie-Giddis et al., 2004). Linguistically diverse students tend to not seek help compared to the English-speaking students (Montgomery, Roberts, & Growe, 2003). In fact, these students may need more guidance, since they often do not have family members helping them navigate the school system (McCall-Perez, 2000) due to language barriers and lack of access to academic preparation in their

home language (Schwallie-Giddis et al., 2004). Such challenges highlight the importance of school–family–community partnerships for school counselors in meeting the needs of diverse students.

To understand school professionals' attitudes regarding connections with families and community, further research is necessary to explore their perceptions (Jordan, Orozco, & Averett, 2001). The following factors are documented in the literature as conducive to or prohibitive of school professionals' involvement in school–family–community partnerships: training in partnerships (Bryan & Holcomb-McCoy, 2004, 2007; Clark & Amatea, 2004; Hiatt-Michael, 2006); caseload (McCarthy, Van Horn Kerne, Calfa, Lambert, & Guzman, 2010); collaborative school climate (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001; Janson, Militello, & Kosine, 2008; Hernández & Seem, 2004; Littrell, Peterson, & Sunde, 2001); principal and school support (Leuwerke, Walker, & Shi, 2009; Perusse, Goodnough, Donegan, & Jones, 2004; Sanders & Harvey, 2002); self-efficacy about partnerships (Bodenhorn, Wolfe, & Airen, 2010; Holcomb-McCoy, Harris, Hines, & Johnston, 2008; Hoover-Dempsey, Walker, Jones, & Reed, 2002), barriers to partnerships (Bryan & Holcomb-McCoy, 2004; Sanders & Harvey, 2002; Van Velsor & Orozco, 2007); attitudes about partnerships and families (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001; Mitchell & Bryan, 2007); role perceptions about partnerships (Bryan & Holcomb-McCoy, 2004, 2007); attitudes about school (Hernández & Seem, 2004; Loukas, Suzuki, & Horton, 2006); and commitment to advocacy (Baker et al., 2009; McCall-Perez, 2000; Ratts, DeKruyf, & Chen-Hayes, 2007).

Specifically regarding school counselors, an examination of the existing literature revealed several school and school counselor factors that may promote or hinder school counselors' partnerships with linguistically diverse families. In an exploratory study of school counselor involvement in partnerships, collaborative school climate, confidence in their ability to build partnerships, role perceptions about partnerships, and attitudes about partnerships were significantly related to school counselors' involvement in partnerships (Bryan & Holcomb-McCoy, 2007). In a later study, collaborative school climate, principal expectations, self-efficacy about partnerships, role perceptions about partnerships, time constraints (or lack of time), and training related to partnerships were significantly related to school counselors' involvement in partnerships (Bryan & Griffin, 2010). In the current exploratory study of school counselor school–family–community partnerships with linguistically diverse families, we used a parsimonious model that included only variables significant in the two previous studies (Bryan & Holcomb-McCoy, 2007; Bryan & Griffin, 2010). These variables are collaborative school climate, principal expectations, role perceptions about partnerships, self-efficacy about partnerships, time constraints,

and partnership-related training. While the variables principal expectations, time constraints, and partnership-related training are single item indicators, other independent variables were factor scores derived from the factor scales.

The following research questions were examined regarding school counselors' perceptions of their involvement in school–family–community partnerships with linguistically diverse families:

Research Question 1: Will the intended factor structure of the survey be the same as that in Bryan and Griffin's (2010) previous study using the revised School Counselor Involvement in Partnerships Survey (SCIPS)?

Research Question 2: What school and school counselor factors are related to school counselor perceived involvement in partnerships with linguistically diverse families (i.e., collaborative school climate, principal expectations, self-efficacy about partnerships, role perceptions about partnerships, time constraints, and partnership-related training)?

Methods

Participants

Among the 330 school counselors invited to take part in the study, 95 of them self-selected to complete the survey. Seventy-two (77%) of the participants were female, 22 (23%) were male, and one school counselor chose not to report his/her gender. While 91 school counselors (97%) classified themselves as White/European, one school counselor was African American/Black, one Hispanic/Latino, and one Asian/Pacific Islander ethnicity. The high percentage (77%) of female and White/European ethnicity (97%) of the study sample is representative of the general school counselor population, which is mostly White and female. Thirty-six school counselors (38%) reported working in an elementary school setting, 29 (31%) in a middle/junior high school setting, 40 (42%) in a high school setting, and 16 in joint appointments. Three school counselors (3%) reported working in private schools and 92 (97%) in public school settings. In the Midwestern state in which the study was conducted, for the school year 1998–1999, the total K–12 enrollment was 545,292 and by 2008–2009 decreased to 521,456. For school year 1999–2000, the total K–12 ELL enrollment was 10,310; for 2004–2005, the ELL enrollment increased to 14,834, and by 2008–2009 jumped to 20,774. While the overall student enrollment is decreasing, the ELL student enrollment is increasing.

The majority of the participants (74%) reported having received 10 or fewer total training hours in developing and implementing school–family–community partnerships, while only 19% of the participants had received 10 or more total training hours. Many (42) school counselors did not have any training for partnerships at all.

Procedures

The primary researcher obtained a list of school counselors from the state's department of education. This list contained the names and addresses of 1,326 school counselors employed in PreK–12 school settings in this Midwestern state. From this population, the study sample was selected by using a systematic one-in-four sampling method (Levy & Lemeshow, 1999), and 330 school counselors were invited to participate. The email addresses of 330 school counselors were obtained by utilizing a thorough web search (i.e., using counselor/school/district names); 95 of them (29%) agreed to participate in the study. Initially, the researchers expected to achieve a 30% response rate; however, achieving a 29% response rate was viewed as satisfactory. Web surveys often have a lower response rate in comparison to mail surveys (Couper, 2000; Solomon, 2001). Kittleson stated, "One can expect between a 25–30% response rate from an email survey when no follow-up takes place. Follow-up reminders will approximately double the response rate for email surveys" (1997, p. 196).

Participants completed the study survey via WebSurveyor. First, counselors in the sample group received a recruitment email indicating they would receive the SCIPS (Bryan & Griffin, 2010) within the next few days. A subsequent email sent to participants included an informed consent letter explaining the purpose of the survey, its voluntary nature, confidentiality, and a hyperlink to the WebSurveyor. Completing the survey verified agreement to the informed consent. Third, 10 days after the informed consent email, the researchers sent a follow-up email, since the response rate was less than 30%. The follow-up email reminded the school counselors that the survey would be closing within a week, and if they had not participated yet and planned on participating, they should do so soon. The survey took about 20 minutes; data was collected through WebSurveyor and coded in an Excel file to be analyzed by SPSS.

Instrumentation

The School Counselor Involvement in Partnerships Survey (SCIPS; Bryan, 2003; Bryan & Holcomb-McCoy, 2004) was designed to examine the relationships among school factors, school counselor factors, partnership-related training, and school counselor perceived involvement in partnerships. The SCIPS was recently revised and tested (see Bryan & Griffin, 2010). After Principal Factor Analysis (PFA; also known as principal axis factor analysis) with an oblique rotation and item analyses were conducted, the revised SCIPS yielded several school and school counselor factors (i.e., collaborative school climate, principal support, role perceptions, self-efficacy about partnerships, commitment to advocacy, attitudes about partnerships, attitudes about families, and

lack of resources) with high Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients (.79 to .94) and moderate to high factor loadings (.41 to .90) on all scales. Items with low communalities less than .30 and factor loadings (pattern coefficients) less than .40 were excluded from the final survey.

We have chosen to use the revised SCIPS (Bryan & Griffin, 2010) because an extensive search yielded no other measures of counselors' perceived involvement in school–family–community partnerships. Since the revised SCIPS was not specifically developed to assess school counselors' involvement with linguistically diverse families, we modified the survey to incorporate the *Linguistically Diverse* phrase throughout as a way to remind the participants to answer questions with respect to these families in particular (e.g., Training *Linguistically Diverse* families and students to access services in the school and community—words in italics added). We also added one item to the items intended to measure perceived involvement in partnerships: "training staff to work collaboratively with linguistically diverse families." However, the researchers did not modify the demographic section or the structure of the survey.

The modified SCIPS in the current study consisted of four sections: (a) an introduction page that described the purpose of the survey and definitions of school–family–community partnership and of linguistically diverse families and students; (b) 15 demographic items (e.g., gender, race, years of experience, caseload, hours of training received in developing and implementing partnerships); (c) 17 items intended to measure school counselors' perceived involvement in school–family–community partnerships with linguistically diverse families (see Table 1) measured on a five point Likert Scale: 1 (*not at all)* to 5 (*very frequently*); (d) 52 items intended to measure the school and school counselor factors measured on a six point Likert Scale: 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*), plus two additional items used to measure time constraints (i.e., "I do not have the time to get involved in partnerships") and principal expectations (i.e., "I believe that the principal expects me to be involved in partnerships"). The 52 items retained for the final factor scales in the previous study were used (Bryan & Griffin, 2010). See Bryan and Griffin (2010) for detailed information on each of the scales.

Data Analyses

Although factor analysis is generally not recommended with sample sizes under 200 (Barlett, Kotrlik, & Higgins, 2001; Gorsuch, 1983), some researchers emphasize that the harsh rules concerning adequate sample size for exploratory factor analysis have generally vanished and suggest that small sample sizes (from $N = 75$ to $N = 100$) can provide accurate analysis especially when the factor loadings are strong. In factor analysis, "strong data" refers to

"uniformly high communalities without cross loadings, plus several variables loading strongly on each factor" (Costello & Osborne, 2005, p. 4). Factor loadings above .30 are considered strong (Floyd & Widaman, 1995).

Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations of School Counselors' Involvement in School–Family–Community (SFC) Partnerships

School–Family–Community Partnership Involvement	*M*	*SD*
Collaborating to organize student support programs (e.g., mentoring)	3.19	1.003
Collaborating to deliver services to students (e.g., parent volunteers)	2.95	1.081
Collaborating with community agency professionals	2.98	1.109
Collaborating with local businesses/industries (e.g., job shadowing)	2.66	1.032
Collaborating with community members on committees (e.g., task force)	2.64	.956
Coordinating school–community outreach efforts	2.80	.934
Coordinating the integration of community services into the school	3.23	1.031
Coordinating programs to help school staff understand LDF	2.84	.976
Coordinating programs to help family/community understand the school	2.96	.966
Coordinating parent education workshops	2.70	1.046
Teaming with school staff, family, and/or community professionals	3.15	1.026
Teaming with SFC to increase parent involvement	3.08	.958
Teaming with school staff or a parent liaison to conduct home visits	2.84	.987
Training staff to build school–family–community partnerships	2.68	1.034
Training parents to access services in the school and community	2.77	.968
Training staff to work collaboratively with LDF	2.70	.982
Locating community resources and services for needy students	2.62	1.030

Note: Items were measured on a Likert scale: 1 (not at all), 2 (rarely), 3 (moderately), 4 (frequently), and 5 (very frequently); LDF = linguistically diverse families

Therefore, we conducted one principal factor analysis (PFA) with oblique rotation on the 17 involvement items (see Table 1) and another on the 52 items intended to measure the school and school counselor factors (see Appendix). We conducted principal factor analysis (also called principal axis factor analysis) because PFA represents the common variance in a set of items and does not require multivariate normality as opposed to Maximum Likelihood Estimation, which requires multivariate normality (Miller & Sheu, 2008). Further, we used an oblique rotation because we expected the factors to be interrelated.

Factor analysis of the survey items allowed us to determine whether the factor structure of the survey was the same as that found in Bryan and Griffin's (2010) study. Items subjected to a PFA were found to be apt for factor analysis according to the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy (i.e., > .80) and the Bartlett's test of sphericity, which was significant. The criteria used to decide how many factors to retain were Kaiser's criterion (eigenvalues > 1.0), Catell's scree test, the factor loadings, and the conceptual meaning of the factor solution (Pett, Lackey, & Sullivan, 2003). Items with factor loadings > .30 on the same factor were grouped together to create factor scores (i.e., factor scores are a linear grouping of the items that load on a specific factor). Cronbach's alphas were also run for items within each factor to provide reliability information (i.e., whether the groups of items within a factor were reliably measuring that factor). Finally, a three-step hierarchical regression analysis was used to examine which factors significantly contributed to predicting the dependent variable. The school and school counselor factors were the independent variables, and the factor derived from the involvement items was the dependent variable for the regression analysis. We used a parsimonious model that included only significant variables in the two previous studies (Bryan & Holcomb-McCoy, 2007; Bryan & Griffin, 2010).

Results

Factor Analysis

Research Question 1. Will the intended factor structure of the survey be the same as that in Bryan and Griffin's (2010) previous study using the revised School Counselor Involvement in Partnerships Survey (SCIPS)? After examining one, two, and three factor solutions for the involvement items, we retained one factor, *school counselor involvement in partnerships* with factor loadings ranging from .86 to .67, and a Cronbach alpha of .96.

The PFA of the 52 items intended to measure the school and school counselor factors yielded an eight-factor solution. Items "I lack the training necessary to build effective partnerships with the community for linguistically diverse families" and "I lack the training necessary to build effective partnerships with linguistically diverse families" were reverse scored before conducting the factor analysis. We dropped five items on the longest scale (see Appendix), for example, "Parents are active volunteers in this school," and "In this school, family involvement is a regular practice." Given the sample size, we felt that dropping these items reduced the number of items entered into the PFA, with the likelihood of increasing the reliability of the results. Re-running the PFA on the remaining 47 items yielded an eight-factor solution that explained 69% of the

variance in the items. Factor scores resulted in the following school variables: (a) *collaborative school climate* (6 items with pattern coefficients ranging from .69 to .37, 6.7% of the variance and α = .91); and (b) *principal support* (9 items with pattern coefficients ranging from .91 to .70, 10.7% of the variance and α = .97); and the following school counselor variables: (a) *self-efficacy about partnerships* (6 items with pattern coefficients ranging from .81 to -.37, 3.9% of the variance and α = .85); (b) *role perceptions about partnerships* (6 items with pattern coefficients ranging from .67 to .47, 5.7% of the variance and α = .90); (c) *attitudes about SFC partnerships* (6 items with pattern coefficients ranging from .91 to .74, 7.7% of the variance and α = .97); (d) *commitment to advocacy* (5 items with pattern coefficients ranging from .86 to .35, 4.5% of the variance and α = .83); (e) *attitudes about families* (5 items with pattern coefficients ranging from -.84 to .33, 4.1% of the variance and α = .76); and (f) *barriers to partnerships* (2 items with pattern coefficients ranging from .60 to .57, 3.3% of the variance and α = .88). The results of the factor analysis were very similar to the factor structure of the revised SCIPS with the same eight factors emerging. We dropped five items and another four items loaded on different factors than they did in Bryan and Griffin's study (see Appendix).

Hierarchical Regression Model

Research Question 2. What school and school counselor factors are related to school counselor perceived involvement in partnerships with linguistically diverse families (i.e., collaborative school climate, principal expectations, self-efficacy about partnerships, role perceptions about partnerships, time constraints, and training related to partnerships)? We wanted to use a parsimonious regression model; therefore, although the factor analysis identified eight factors, we utilized only four factors in the hierarchical regression analysis predicting school counselor perceived involvement in school–family–community partnerships with linguistically diverse families. We used predictor variables that were significant in previous studies utilizing the SCIPS (Bryan & Holcomb-McCoy, 2007; Bryan & Griffin, 2010). Therefore, collaborative climate, self-efficacy about partnerships, role perceptions about partnerships, and attitudes about partnerships were predictor variables in the model. In addition, we entered three single item variables—principal expectations, time constraints, and training related to partnerships—into the model as predictor variables. All variables were standardized for entry into the analysis. In the first step, we entered the school variables, collaborative climate, and principal expectations. In the second step, we entered the school counselor variables, self-efficacy about partnerships, role perceptions, attitudes about partnerships, and time constraints. In the last step, we entered training related to partnerships.

In Step 1, collaborative climate and principal expectations accounted for a significant proportion of variance in school counselor perceived involvement in school–family–community partnerships with linguistically diverse families, R^2 = .331, F (2, 61) = 15.091, p < .05, Adjusted R^2 = .309. Principal expectations significantly predicted school counselor perceived involvement in partnerships with linguistically diverse families, β = .545, t = 4.734, p = .000. In the second step (after controlling for the school variables), self-efficacy about partnerships, role perceptions, attitudes about partnerships, and time constraints contributed significantly to explaining the variance in school counselor perceived involvement in partnerships with linguistically diverse families, R^2 = .492, F (4, 57) = 4.533, p < .05), Adjusted R^2 = .439. Role perceptions, β = .311, t = 2.461, p = .017, was a significant predictor of school counselor perceived involvement in partnerships with linguistically diverse families. Principal expectations also remained significant at Step 2, β = .287, t = 2.270, p = .027.

After controlling for the school and school counselor variables in Steps 1 and 2, training related to partnerships explained a significant proportion of the variance in school counselor perceived involvement in partnerships with linguistically diverse families, R^2 = .537, F (1, 56) = 5.402, p < .05, Adjusted R^2 = .479. In the final step, training was significantly related to school counselor perceived involvement in partnerships with linguistically diverse families, β = .235, t = 2.324, p = .024. At this step of the model, principal expectations, β = .319, t = 2.604, p = .012, and role perceptions, β = .297, t = 2.438, p = .018, were also significant predictors of school counselor perceived involvement in partnerships with linguistically diverse families. Interestingly, time constraints (i.e., lack of time) was significant, but positively related to school counselor perceived involvement in partnerships with linguistically diverse families at this step of the model, β = .239, t = 2.493, p = .016.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine whether the factor structure of the revised SCIPS was the same as that in Bryan & Griffin's (2010) study and to examine which factors predict school counselor involvement in partnerships with linguistically diverse families. Given the scarcity of the research to guide school counselor practice with such families, this study supports the need for school counselors and school counselor educators to focus on four factors as they seek to build partnerships with linguistically diverse families: school principal expectations, school counselor role perceptions about partnerships, time constraints, and partnership-related training. As a result of the changing demographics of American schools, school–family–community partnerships are

a crucial topic of interest, debate, and research to meet the needs of all (i.e., minority and majority) students (Jordan et al., 2001). Rapidly changing demographics across the country require school counselors to reexamine their role and role perceptions about partnerships and preparation as they relate to working with linguistically diverse families in order to establish and facilitate effective school–family–community partnerships.

Despite the limitations of the current study's small sample size, using the revised SCIPS to assess school counselor involvement in partnerships with linguistically diverse families yielded a similar factor structure as that in Bryan & Griffin's (2010) study. The same eight school and school counselor factors emerged in response to the factor analysis of school counselors' responses. In this study, with the exception of four items, the survey items loaded on the same factors as those found in Bryan & Griffin's (2010) study (see Appendix for a comparison of loadings in both studies). This suggests that the factor structure may be stable across independent samples of school counselors and that the survey may be applicable to various types of partnership activities. It would be interesting to examine whether the factor structure holds for different types of mental health professionals (e.g., community or mental health counselors, school psychologists, school social workers), or various partnership activities (e.g., partnerships with homeless, migrant, low-income, or African American families).

In the current study, school principal expectations, school counselor role perceptions about partnerships, and partnership-related training were all positively related to school counselor involvement in school–family–community partnerships. School counselors are more likely to build partnerships with linguistically diverse families when their principal expects them to, when they perceive it as their role to do so, and when they have had training related to developing and implementing partnerships. These findings are corroborated by findings from previous studies (Bryan & Holcomb-McCoy, 2004, 2007; Bryan & Griffin, 2010). In addition, it is interesting to note that in this study, time constraints (i.e., lack of time) is positively related to school counselor involvement in partnerships with linguistically diverse families, which may indicate that the time constraints school counselors face may not be a deterrent when it comes to building partnerships with these families This may be because school counselors see the importance of reaching out to families whose first language is not English, regardless of the time constraints they face due to numerous daily demands in their jobs. It is also surprising that self-efficacy about partnerships was not significantly related to school counselor perceived involvement in partnerships with linguistically diverse families given that it was a significant predictor in previous studies (Bryan & Holcomb-McCoy, 2007; Bryan &

Griffin, 2010). These relationships warrant further investigation with a larger nationally representative study. Findings support that partnership-related training was an influential factor for various partnership behaviors and perceptions. Finally, the positive relationship between partnership-related training and school counselor perceived involvement in school–family–community partnerships with linguistically diverse families underscores the importance of infusing training on partnerships into counselor education programs and ongoing professional development.

This study supports the conceptual model based on empirical evidence to facilitate the implementation of distinctive techniques for developing partnerships with linguistically diverse families (e.g., Bryan, 2005; Bryan & Henry, 2008; Bryan & Holcomb-McCoy, 2007; Mitchell & Bryan, 2007), offering vital information critical for school counselors and counselor educators on how achievement gaps can be narrowed. There are a multitude of challenges that linguistically diverse students and their families experience (e.g., limited resources for bilingual students, limited number of bilingual school staff, availability of bilingual education). In Aydın (2011), a national study with 916 school counselors, an additional factor, race and ethnicity, emerged as an important aspect related to involvement in school–family–community partnerships. School counselors who were non-White had statistically significant higher involvement scores compared to school counselors from White backgrounds. Knowing that race and ethnicity and bilingual status were negatively correlated, White school counselors who speak only English may have experienced limitations to building partnerships with linguistically diverse families. In addition, the use of translators was related to the percentage of linguistically diverse students served. School counselors more frequently utilized translators as enrollment of linguistically diverse students increased at their schools. Percentages of linguistically diverse students served were significantly correlated with free and reduced-priced lunch status and caseload; bilingual status and race and ethnicity also related to percentages of such students. Whenever school counselors had higher percentages of linguistically diverse students, they were more likely to have a higher number of students as part of their caseload, and to serve more students speaking another language, from diverse backgrounds, and receiving free or reduced-priced lunches. These findings illuminate the complex interplay of challenges that linguistically diverse students and families experience. It may be necessary for counselors and other school staff to further understand these factors related to involvement and the unique ways in which school staff and families' sociocultural factors (e.g., race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status) influence interpersonal interactions and relationships, helping or hindering partnerships with linguistically diverse families (Aydın, 2011).

Limitations and Future Research

There are several limitations that one must consider when interpreting the results of this study. The primary limitation is the self-selection nature of the study, which introduces sampling bias, since not everyone invited took part in the study. Also, those who decided to participate may have presented themselves in a professionally desirable way. Hence, attempts to generalize the results nationally should be done with caution. However, one must also keep in mind that the moderate sample size was viewed to be appropriate for the exploratory nature of the study.

Another limitation is that the participants were drawn only from one Midwestern state; only one state was selected due to time and monetary constraints. There may be differences among the survey participants' perceptions in comparison to the larger group of counselors' perceptions in the state and the nation. The participants were chosen via systematic sampling method; they self-selected and the sample size is small (N = 95), posing limitations for the interpretation of the findings. We acknowledge that school counselors' perceptions in one state may not be representative of all school counselors. A national sample of participants is necessary to examine the findings further. Also, one must also keep in mind that the nature of factor analysis was not confirmatory, but exploratory due to the modest sample size. Replication of the study with a larger sample size is necessary before generalizing the results.

Implications for Practice and Training

The results of this study suggested several implications for school counseling practice and training related to school–family–community partnerships. The findings indicated that school counselors' role performance concerning partnering with linguistically diverse families is influenced by school principals' expectations. School counselors should play an active role in increasing the sensitivity of their school administration on issues regarding partnership with all families. School counselors need to become proactive in educating principals as well as the public about their role and need for collaboration with other stakeholders. Counselors need to clarify their professional identity in school so that they do not have to give up their essential roles (Bryan & Holcomb-McCoy, 2004). Also, setting appropriate and professional boundaries with school administrators to efficiently meet the academic, career, and personal/social needs of students has been an ongoing problem for school counselors. School principals play a significant role in defining school counselors' roles in schools. However, many school administrators lack an accurate view of the role and

skills of school counselors, while making many decisions for them (Paisley & McMahon, 2001). Therefore, it is necessary to educate school administrators, be proactive in programming, and set clearly defined professional boundaries to assert professional status (Paisley & McMahon, 2001).

As proactive leaders and advocates in their schools, in addition to setting clear professional boundaries, school counselors need to know how to work with boards of education, how to influence power, how to use the impact of accountability, how to use data for marketing, and how to market their school counseling program. When working with the administration and local boards of education, ASCA (2010) recommends similar strategies to show how school counseling programs affect student achievement through graphical and statistical data. Given the relationship of partnership-related training to school counselor perceived involvement in school–family–community partnerships with linguistically diverse families and the importance of collaboration and partnerships in the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) standards (2009), counselor educators will need to consider how to best train school counseling candidates for partnerships with linguistically diverse families. School counselors should be trained in systems theories to understand dynamics in partnerships. A systems perspective draws upon both general systems and ecological theories, which is consistent with a comprehensive school counseling program's multisystemic focus. In order to help students (i.e., promote behavior change), school counselors need to be attentive to the existing interrelated subsystems (e.g., family, peer group, the school, and the community) and their influence on students' lives (Keys & Lockhart, 1999), and remain proactive in defining their roles as collaborators and educational advocates. In addition to training school counselors in building partnerships to increase their participation, counselor education programs should also train them to be advocates for partnership programs, to formulate strategies to overcome obstacles, and to be change agents in the school system, in order to overcome the barriers that school counselors experience in their involvement with school–family–community partnership programs (Bryan & Holcomb-McCoy, 2004).

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Appendix. Comparing the Pattern Coefficients from the Principal Factor Analysis of Items Retained on the Revised SCIPS in the Previous and Current Study

Items on the SCIPS	P_a	P_b
School Factors		
Collaborative School Climate (CC; 7 items)		
This school has a friendly atmosphere	.759	.418
Parents feel welcome in this school	.638	.368
This school values SFC partnerships	.598	.638
This school has a climate that is conducive to fostering partnerships with families	.563	.694
This school has a climate that is conducive to fostering partnerships with the community	.495	.678
Parents visit our school often	.412	[b]AF
In this school, there is clear communication between families and staff	.409	[b]PS
Principal Support (PS; 9 items)		
The principal supports those who lead partnership activities	.821	.836
The principal supports community involvement in the school	.819	.909
The principal supports me in building partnerships with community members	.792	.731

The principal actively networks with the community	.784	.759
The principal supports me in building partnerships with families	.763	.914
The principal is skillful at building relationships with community members	.748	.878
The principal encourages teacher participation in planning partnerships	.744	.703
The principal supports family involvement in the school	.646	.879
School Counselor Factors		
Role Perceptions (RP; 6 items)		
I enjoy building SFC partnerships	.647	.470
I think that counselor involvement in community partnerships is important	.625	.666
I am capable of developing SFC partnerships	.532	.502
I must build partnerships to advocate for students effectively	.512	.549
I find it necessary to build partnerships to obtain services for students	.512	.674
I think that counselor involvement in partnerships with families is important	.423	.602
Self-Efficacy About Partnerships (SE; 6 items)		
I lack the training necessary to build effective partnerships with the community*	.897	.814
I lack the training necessary to build effective partnerships with families*	.742	.709
I am confident in my ability to initiate SFC partnerships	-.562	-.540
I have received sufficient training to implement SFC partnerships	-.557	-.365
I have the skills to build partnership programs with communities	-.552	-.472
I have the skills to build partnership programs with families	-.480	-.588
Commitment to Advocacy (CA; 5 items)		
I feel a need to advocate for disadvantaged families	-.751	.652
I am a voice for children to ensure that the school meets their needs	-.651	.530
I would actively advocate for children even if I did not consider it part of my role	-.643	.864
I want children and parents to believe that I am their advocate	-.509	.350
I make special efforts to advocate for racially and ethnically diverse students	-.414	.431
Attitudes About Partnerships (AP; 6 items)		
SFC partnerships are important for an effective school	.852	.886
SFC partnerships help counselors/school psychologists to be more effective in meeting the needs of children	.848	.904
SFC partnerships are very important for helping children succeed	.813	.891
SFC partnerships are beneficial to the counseling/psychological services program	.764	.743
SFC partnerships provide support for the counseling program/school psychologists	.726	.778

SFC partnerships enhance the school's climate	.703	.913
Lack of Resources/Perceived Barriers (LR; 2 items)		
In this school, there are insufficient resources for building partnerships	.868	.595
In this school, there are insufficient funds for implementing partnerships	.827	.576
Attitudes About Families (AF; 6 items in this study)		
Parents become involved in their children's education when teachers invite them to	-.717	-.842
In this school, it is difficult to get families involved in partnerships*	.680	[b]LR
Parents are hard to reach*	.667	.328
Parents become involved in their children's education when counselors/ school psychologists invite them to	-.664	-.695
Parents are interested in their children's education	-.648	-.459
Parents do not know how to help their children succeed academically*	.611	[b] LR
In this school, many students face severe economic, social, and emotional needs*	.564	*d*
Parents are active volunteers in this school	-.514	*d*
In this school, family involvement is a regular practice	-.497	*d*
Parents play many different partnership roles in this school	-.485	*d*
Parents are not regularly involved in this school*	.472	*d*
[a]**Single Item Indicators Included on the SCIPS**		
Time Constraints/Lack of Time		
I do not have the time to get involved in partnerships	-	-
Principal Expectations		
I believe that the principal expects me to be involved in partnerships	-	-

Note: All items were measured on a 6-point Likert Scale: 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*).

P_a = pattern coefficient for previous study (Bryan & Griffin, 2010).

P_b = pattern coefficient for current study.

[a] In Bryan & Griffin's (2010) study, 52 items measuring the school and school counselor items were retained plus two additional single items used to measure time constraints and principal expectations.

[b] In the current study this item loaded on another factor indicated by the following abbreviations - AF = Attitudes About Families; PS = Principal Support; LR = Lack of Resources.

d = item dropped.

SCIPS = School Counselor Involvement in Partnerships Survey

SFC = school–family–community

*Reverse scored items